

# Производителите на азотни торове в ЕС стават все по-зависими от Русия

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“Europe is now more dependent on Russia than it was before the war. The EU has replaced energy dependence with dependence on fertilizers,” warned the CEO and President of the Norwegian chemical company Yara, Svein Tore Holsether, at a meeting with journalists, the German edition of EURACTIV reported.

According to Eurostat data presented at the meeting, nitrogen imports into the EU increased by 34 percent in the 2022-2023 fertilizer campaign (July to June) compared to the previous period. Russia accounts for about one third of total imports.

Urea imports increased by 53 percent, doubling since 2020-2021. Forty percent of these originate from Russia. In the current season the trend is slowing down, but the share of Russian urea in total imports is still almost one third.

“Europe managed to reduce its energy dependence on Russia in a very short period of time,” Holsether said. “But the price paid by households and industry was enormous.”

“I am very worried,” Holsether continued, “if we straightforwardly repeat exactly the same with fertilizers as we did with energy.” The growing dependence also has an impact on the environment, as Holsether emphasized.

By replacing European fertilizers with those from Russia or from other parts of the world, in practice the EU is importing fertilizers with a much higher carbon footprint – “50 to 60% higher than European production,” the CEO of Yara stressed.

Holsether described 2024 as a “crucial year” for the EU, taking actions that will determine the next decade in agriculture. He called for incentives for farmers to facilitate them in making environmentally friendly decisions while maintaining production levels.

Holsether reiterated his call for the creation of a “predictable financial framework” for EU industry, modeled on the US Inflation Reduction Act, the US subsidy programme supporting the green transition.

## **Additional requirements**

Fertilizer production is energy-intensive and heavily dependent on fossil fuels, especially gas. According to experts, it will take 15 to 20 years to phase out the production of fossil-based fertilizers and move to bio-based solutions. With the right incentives, however, this is achievable.

The Latvian delegation in the Council of the European Union requested a debate on “sanctions against imported Russian agricultural products” at the next meeting of EU agriculture ministers on 23 January.